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SUBJECT: SUSPENSION OF THE GOVERNOR OF WEST EQUATORIA

Classified By: CGJ R. Whitehead, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: A mid-June GoSS presidential decree suspended West Equatoria Governor Zamoi, who is blamed for Zande attacks in February on Dinka herders, which resulted in the deaths of 70 individuals. Zamoi is also linked to the embezzlement of stabilization funds. Ethnic balance remains a decisive factor in GoSS portfolios, rendering personnel decisions a careful calculation. End summary.

¶W. Equatoria Governor Suspended for Inciting Attacks

¶2. (C) Governor of West Equatoria State Col. Patrick Zamoi was suspended by presidential decree in mid-June, and Zamoi remains under house arrest in Juba. Southern Sudanese Legislative Assembly Chairperson of the Business Committee Peter Bashir Bendi (protect), who comes from West Equatoria, explained the story behind the story. He said that Zamoi, a Zande, inflamed an already tense situation following his February arrival in Yambio by urging the Zande population to attack Dinka herders who had not returned to their homelands following signature of the CPA. The Zande harbor deep antipathy toward the Dinka, who are viewed as interlopers and remembered for their depredations against the local population when SPLA battalions from Dinka areas retreated into West Equatoria during the conflict.

The Plot Thickens: Gov. Hides Evidence, Misuses Funds

¶3. (C) Bendi said that more than seventy persons died during the February clashes between the two groups, the majority of whom were Dinka. When an investigation began, Zamoi attempted to cover up his part in the affair by disinterring bodies and incinerating them. In addition, Bendi went on, Zamoi misused the stabilization funds allotted to him to set up basic government structures to finance an extravagant lifestyle for himself and several select state ministers. Zamoi has not yet been charged, but Bendi expected him to be indicted formally and tried for his misdeeds.

Equilibrium in Equatoria: A Question of Ethnic Balance

¶4. (C) Bendi explained that the delay in suspending Zamoi was due to delicate questions of ethnicity. To maintain social equilibrium, the GoSS has been forced to strike a balance between ethnic groups, ensuring that each has nominal primacy in its home area. The transition of Bari Major General Clement Wani Konga from National Congress Party Governor of Central Equatoria State to SPLM Governor of the same state is but one example of balancing, and Zamoi's nomination another. Bendi said that Salva Kiir is keenly aware of Equatorian fear of Dinka hegemony and thus has acted

judiciously to avoid offending the peoples of the southernmost region of Southern Sudan. Nonetheless, there is an ongoing whispering campaign that Zamoi is the victim of a Dinka purge.

¶5. (C) Bendi said that he believed that Zamoi was guilty of the alleged misdeeds, and saw the hand of the NCP involved. Zamoi is close to NCP Minister of Labor and Human Resources General Alison Magaya, also a Zande, who has sought to maintain political space for the NCP in West Equatoria, since Magaya is not welcome in the SPLM because of his long ties to Khartoum. Bendi believed that Magaya had instigated Zamoi to lash out at the Dinka.

Neutral Party as Likely Replacement, Distancing a Motive

¶6. (C) Zamoi's replacement has not been named, but other sources claim that Bendi is high on the short list for the job. From the small Baka tribe, a neighbor of the Zande, he would be seen as a more neutral party acceptable to both sides. In addition, Bendi's anti-corruption muckraking in the Southern Legislative Assembly has reportedly discomfited several SPLM notables, who would be happier were Bendi safely out of sight in Yambio.

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